

**Report of the
Minister's Advisory Group
on the Provision of
Co-instructional Activities**

April 2001

**Advisory Group on the Provision
of Co-Instructional Activities**

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6 April 2001

The Honourable Janet Ecker
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Madame Minister,

We herewith respectfully submit the final report of the Minister's Advisory Group on the Provision of Co-instructional Activities.

Sincerely,

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Contents

1. Background to the Study	3
1.1 The Importance of Co-instructional Activities	3
1.2 The Current Situation in Ontario	3
1.3 The Objectives of the Minister's Advisory Group	4
1.4 Consultation and Research Process	5
2. What We Heard	6
2.1 Key Challenges to the Provision of Co-instructional Activities	6
2.2 How Some School Communities Successfully Deliver Co-instructional Activities	8
2.3 How Three Other Jurisdictions Deliver Co-instructional Activities	10
2.4 Community Involvement in Co-instructional Activities	11
3. Options and Recommendations	12
3.1 Guiding Principles	12
3.2 Options Considered	12
3.3 Recommendations	20
3.4 Other Key Issues	27
4. Conclusion	28
5. List of Recommendations	29
Appendices	
A: Biographies of the Members of the Minister's Advisory Group on the Provision of Co-instructional Activities	31
B: Overview of the Provision of Co-instructional Activities at 21 District School Boards	33
C: Education Partner Groups Consulted	40
D: Organizations and Individuals That Presented Briefs and/or Provided Written Submissions	41
E: Selected Bibliography	46

2

I. Background to the Study

I.1 The Importance of Co-instructional Activities

Section 1(1) of the Education Act defines co-instructional activities as follows:

"... activities other than providing instruction that,

- a) support the operation of schools,
- b) enrich pupils' school-related experience, whether within or beyond the instructional program, or
- c) advance pupils' education and education-related goals,

and includes but is not limited to activities having to do with school-related sports, arts and cultural activities, parent-teacher and pupil-teacher interviews, letters of support for pupils, staff meetings and school functions. ..."

The experiences of educators across North America, as well as the findings of numerous research studies, indicate that co-instructional activities such as sports and the arts are vitally important parts of a student's education. Students who participate in co-instructional activities have greater opportunities to develop character, critical thinking skills, social skills, and talents. They learn first-hand the importance of teamwork, responsibility, commitment, and hard work. These qualities are sought after by employers and improve students' chances for successful careers.

Participation in co-instructional activities improves a student's chances of avoiding risky behaviours, such as dropping out, becoming a teenage parent, engaging in delinquency, smoking, or abusing drugs or alcohol. It can also reduce racism by providing students with positive forms of contact with students from different ethnic and racial backgrounds (Klesse and D'Onofrio, 5-7).

Traditionally, in Ontario as elsewhere, teachers have led co-instructional activities, believing that these activities are an important part of a student's education and a teacher's work.

I.2 The Current Situation in Ontario

In the past few years, teachers' unions in some of Ontario's district school boards have withdrawn from leading and participating in co-instructional activities as a bargaining tactic, to influence the outcome of collective negotiations. At present, most boards in Ontario do not offer their students a full range of co-instructional activities. In June 2000, the government introduced the Education Accountability Act (Bill 74), which included provisions for the accountability of school boards, limitations on average class sizes, and the minimum teaching assignments of classroom teachers in secondary schools. After the introduction of Bill 74,

levels of co-instructional activity dropped in most schools. In some schools, co-instructional activities have ceased completely. All boards and schools report that the quality of the co-instructional activities that are offered has suffered significantly.

Participation by teachers in such activities as conducting parent-teacher interviews, providing extra assistance to students, and attending staff meetings and student graduations is considered voluntary by teachers' unions. Teachers have therefore withdrawn from these activities, as well as from co-instructional sports and cultural activities.

The situation across the province is deteriorating, even in the few schools that have so far managed to maintain traditional levels of co-instructional activity. Principals of these schools told us that they do not believe they can continue to maintain these levels in the next school year. In fact, everyone with whom we spoke expressed a sense of great urgency about resolving the issue.

Teachers told us that they want to participate in co-instructional activities to develop strong relationships with their students, which in turn makes their work more rewarding. As one teacher of 22 years told us, "Schools without extra-curricular activities become sterile institutions where teachers and students can only give information and receive instruction without having deeper human relationships."

Students across Ontario are losing out on an important part of their education, and they and their parents expect the issue to be resolved quickly.

1.3 The Objectives of the Minister's Advisory Group

In January 2001, the Minister of Education established our five-member Minister's Advisory Group on the Provision of Co-instructional Activities "to ensure that all students in Ontario have access to a full range of co-instructional activities." Biographies of the five members are attached to this report as Appendix A.

We were asked to report, by mid-March 2001, on the following:

1. the ways in which school communities currently successfully deliver co-instructional activities in Ontario;
2. the models for the delivery of co-instructional activities in other provinces and jurisdictions that could be considered in Ontario
3. recommended changes at the local, regional, and provincial levels to ensure that traditional levels of co-instructional activities are delivered in a manner consistent with the following objectives:
 - all students in the province have continued access to a full range of activities necessary for a balanced educational experience;
 - volunteer and community delivery components are an integral part of the service delivery; and
 - the provision of co-instructional activities is not used as an inappropriate bargaining tactic in collective negotiations.

As members of the advisory group, we resolved early on to focus on the needs of *students* and to keep their needs foremost in our minds in formulating our recommendations to the Minister.

I.4 Consultation and Research Process

We visited 21 district school boards in Ontario. These meetings were organized through the Ministry of Education's district offices, and included students, parents, trustees, teachers, teacher union representatives, athletic association executive members, principals, and board administrators. A list of these boards and summaries of their current co-instructional activity situations are attached as Appendix B.

In addition to consulting district school boards, we invited 25 English- and French-language education organizations to make written submissions and to present these submissions to us. These organizations represent students, parents, teachers' unions, trustees, principals, and board administrators. A list of these organizations is attached as Appendix C.

We also met with education community representatives from Quebec, Manitoba, and Rochester, New York, to learn how they deliver co-instructional activities. As well, we reviewed additional written submissions sent to us by other interested parties. Appendix D contains a list of all the organizations and individuals who submitted written briefs.

We also conducted a literature search and reviewed papers on the provision of co-instructional athletic activities that were presented at a winter 2000 conference at the University of Toronto. Appendix E is a selected bibliography.

2. What We Heard

This section of the report describes what we heard in our consultations and learned from our research. It does not necessarily reflect our views of the current situation, but rather the opinions and beliefs of those with whom we consulted.

2.1 Key Challenges to the Provision of Co-instructional Activities

Representatives of district school boards and other education partners with whom we met identified three key issues that are challenging the ability of Ontario's education systems to provide co-instructional activities: respect, time, and resources.

Respect

Many of those who participated in our consultation believe that in Ontario the work of teachers is not valued and the teaching profession is not respected. This perceived lack of respect, we were told, has resulted in teachers experiencing low morale, low self-esteem, high levels of stress, and reluctance to participate in co-instructional activities.

Many groups told us that the teaching profession's withdrawal from co-instructional activities has exacerbated the problem and has led to an even greater decline in public respect for teachers. Many students, parents, and board administrators stated their belief that teachers should not use this kind of withdrawal of services as a bargaining tool.

Teachers told us that lack of respect is negatively affecting their ability to implement, in a positive and effective manner, the rapid series of changes introduced over the last few years by the government – new curriculum, new report cards, and province-wide testing of students. The students, parents, and board administrators we heard from appear to share this belief.

Some teachers who have chosen to continue participating in co-instructional activities, despite the time and resource challenges described below, reported that they are “getting a rough time” from their union colleagues about their participation. In some cases, the pressure was reported to be significant and the teachers involved said that they feel added stress from this pressure.

All the education partners we heard from identified the issue of respect for teachers as a critical challenge facing education in Ontario today. Many people suggested that even if the Minister of Education resolves the co-instructional

activities issue, education in Ontario will still suffer significantly until what was referred to as the "root cause" of labour unrest in education – respect for and value of the teaching profession – is addressed.

"Although all my co-instructional programs are up and running this year, I will not be able to sustain them in future years unless the time issue is addressed."

(Principal)

Time

In 1997, the Legislature passed the Education Quality Improvement Act (Bill 160), which reformed Ontario's education system, establishing a new system of district school boards, centralized funding for elementary and secondary education, and new standards for class size and instruction time. The act resulted in major changes to secondary school teachers' workloads and workdays, including an increase in instruction time, but it caused few changes to the workday structure in elementary schools. We were told that this is part of the reason that co-instructional activities continue to operate at traditional levels in most elementary schools, but are significantly reduced in secondary schools.

Teachers told us that they like the new curriculum and are working hard to implement it and the other changes introduced in the last few years by the government, but that they are finding this work very stressful. They say that these changes have been introduced rapidly and that they require a considerable amount of teacher preparation time. As a result of the increase in instruction (classroom) time, however, teachers have less preparation time available to them.

Teachers and principals also reported other time-related challenges that they say affect teachers' ability to participate in co-instructional activities:

- Teachers with young families feel that they cannot participate in co-instructional activities as well as care for their families, plan lessons, mark student papers, and concentrate on the professional development necessary to implement the ministry's changes.
- Experienced teachers report that they now have less time to mentor new teachers, which is how most new teachers become involved in co-instructional activities.
- Teachers working for Catholic boards have commitments to a variety of social justice and other Catholic value-based co-instructional activities, which require additional time to that spent on regular co-instructional activities.
- French-language boards have traditionally made more use of co-instructional activities than English-language boards, because of the importance the French-language boards place on providing activities in a French-language setting to help preserve the French language and culture.

We were told that all these time-related challenges are creating high levels of stress in the teaching profession, particularly at the secondary level. Board officials said that teachers are making more long-term disability and drug plan claims, are absent more, and are making greater use of employee assistance programs.

The new secondary school curriculum contains few half-credit courses. Because of this, and to reduce the number of secondary school teachers in semester systems who teach four out of four classes per day, many boards and schools have

assigned two teachers to share the teaching of full-credit courses. That way, each teaches three and a half classes and has the additional half-a-class time for planning and marking. Students told us that they find this system disruptive. We also heard that it has resulted in a number of teachers teaching material that is outside their area of expertise, a practice that is pedagogically unsound.

Resources

There is no specific envelope (line item) in the Ministry of Education's funding formula for co-instructional activities; boards must fund them from their general operating revenues. Co-instructional activities must therefore compete with other board programs for financial resources.

The funding formula does contain envelopes for items that are related to the provision of co-instructional activities, such as transportation and occasional teachers, but the funding provided under these categories often cannot accommodate costs related to co-instructional activity. For example, many boards reported the following:

- Their transportation budgets do not always cover the travel requirements of sports teams and other co-instructional activities.
- One of the ways boards are cutting costs is by cancelling or decreasing the number of late buses they operate, which means that students who rely on school buses to get home cannot attend after-school co-instructional activities.
- Boards are finding it difficult to cover the increasing costs of using community recreation facilities (for example, paying for ice time at community arenas).
- Boards do not always have sufficient funds to pay for occasional teachers to cover teachers who need to participate in out-of-school co-instructional activities during the school day. In such situations, a school team or group may be unable to participate in an out-of-school event.

2.2 How Some School Communities Successfully Deliver Co-instructional Activities

Of the 21 district school boards we visited, only two boards – the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic and Huron-Superior Catholic District School Boards – reported success in maintaining close to traditional levels of co-instructional activity. In other boards, individual schools, but not the board as a whole, reported such success.

Generally, where levels of co-instructional activity are still high, some or all of the following factors are in effect:

- The board's trustees, director, senior staff, and school principals are respected by the board's teachers. These groups have excellent relationships and good communications.
- There are no, or few, labour problems.

- Teachers feel valued by their board.
- Directors have worked hard to develop good relationships with teacher union representatives.
- Local teacher union representatives are not adamant about teachers withdrawing from participation in co-instructional activities (for example, they do not pressure those who choose to continue participating).
- Boards have hired or assigned activity coordinators to help teachers organize co-instructional activities.
- Boards have provided occasional teachers to cover for regular teachers for a certain number of days to facilitate the regular teachers' involvement in co-instructional activities.
- Boards and schools have actively nurtured a culture that encourages and values parent and community volunteers.

The commitment of board senior administrators and school principals to maintaining near-traditional levels of co-instructional activity appears to be a key factor in successfully maintaining these activities. We were warned, however, that in the current education labour-relations environment, boards may have difficulty sustaining many of the above factors. Principals at schools that currently have high levels of co-instructional activities told us that they do not believe they will be able to maintain these levels in the next school year.

Where activity coordinators are in place, they act as links among board and school administrators, teachers, school councils, students, community members, parents, and corporate partners. Activity coordinators are also responsible for raising funds for co-instructional activities. All of a board's or school's co-instructional activity funds, systems, and resources are the responsibility of, and are accessed through, the coordinator. Boards that have activity coordinators expressed their belief that having such a coordinator improves the effectiveness of co-instructional activities throughout their systems.

Some boards have one activity coordinator for the entire system, while others share a coordinator with coterminous boards. These coordinators can be teachers or non-teachers (such as professional sports administrators). In some cases, such as in the Waterloo Region District School Board, individual schools have activity coordinators. These school activity coordinators are teachers who have been allocated time to perform this additional responsibility.

2.3 How Three Other Jurisdictions Deliver Co-instructional Activities

We examined co-instructional activity delivery models in a number of other Canadian and international jurisdictions by reviewing written submissions and research studies.

In addition, we met with education community representatives from Quebec, Manitoba, and Rochester, New York, who described for us the ways in which their jurisdictions facilitate teacher involvement in co-instructional activities. We point out that in each of these jurisdictions, teachers participate in co-instructional activities during their prescribed workdays.

Quebec

Quebec facilitates voluntary teacher participation in co-instructional activities in a variety of ways that are established by board policy, local school arrangements, or collective agreements. The preferred method is by board policy. The methods of facilitation include providing teachers with compensating time off, applying credits for participation in co-instructional activities to teachers' workloads, or paying teachers for their participation in co-instructional activities.

To date, teachers in Quebec have not used withdrawal from participation in co-instructional activities as a bargaining tactic.

Manitoba

Manitoba facilitates voluntary teacher participation in co-instructional activities by compensating teachers with time off (up to five days), paying them for their participation in co-instructional activities, or through a combination of both. Compensation decisions are made locally.

A judicial court in Manitoba has determined that because teachers have traditionally given their time and service to co-instructional activities, these activities have become part of a teacher's job. This decision has not yet been judicially reviewed.

Rochester, New York

In Rochester, teachers are paid for participating in co-instructional activities. Scales of pay and criteria for various co-instructional activities are established, and teachers negotiate contracts with principals for their involvement in these activities. Teachers' participation is voluntary up to the point when they sign a contract. Once the contract is signed, they cannot withdraw their services.

2.4 Community Involvement in Co-instructional Activities

"We believe that parents are best partnered with teachers and should serve in a supportive or supplementary role."
(Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations)

"No programs appear to be viable with community volunteers 'alone' or in the majority, within a school-based program."
(Ontario Association of Supervisors of Physical and Health Education)

We observed that people across the province are strongly committed to the involvement of parent and community volunteers in co-instructional activities. We also heard praise from many people for the significant contributions made by those who volunteer for co-instructional activities. It is clear to us that the assistance of volunteers in providing co-instructional activities is highly valued throughout the province. Some boards actively recruit volunteers, and have developed policies on their use in co-instructional activities.

We also heard general agreement that the contributions of parent and community volunteers should *enhance or complement* the leadership of teachers in the provision of co-instructional activities.

None of the groups we heard from supported the idea of community groups or volunteers leading or completely managing the delivery of co-instructional activities.

The following concerns were cited about community groups or volunteers being the sole providers of co-instructional activities:

- Student safety may be jeopardized.
- Educational values may not be reinforced.
- There would be no equality of opportunity for students to participate, because of variations in geography and demographics across the province.
- The bond formed between teachers and students through their participation in co-instructional activities would be lost.
- The range of activities would be reduced, because program offerings would depend on the availability of volunteers.

With respect to the last point, the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations reported that in the 1999–2000 school year, there were 24,000 coaches in Ontario schools. Approximately 18,500 of these coaches were teachers, 2,000 were students, and 2,500 were community volunteers. It would be a huge task to replace 18,500 teacher coaches with community volunteers, not to mention finding volunteers to replace teachers in other co-instructional activities.

Almost all of the groups we heard from strongly recommended that teachers retain the leadership role in co-instructional activities, and that the valuable contributions of parent and community volunteers complement the teachers' work.

3. Options and Recommendations

3.1 Guiding Principles

Members of the advisory group agree that for any solution to the co-instructional activities issue to be effective and sustainable over the long term, it must address the following nine principles. We arrived at these principles after our extensive consultations with education partners across Ontario.

1. Students must be the focus of any solution.
2. Teachers' involvement in co-instructional activities must be voluntary.
3. Teachers are the best-trained and most knowledgeable people to lead co-instructional activities.
4. Trained community volunteers should be encouraged to complement the work of teachers.
5. Solutions must address both the elementary and the secondary school systems.
6. Solutions must address the unique needs of Catholic, francophone, and First Nations communities.
7. Solutions must be educationally sound.
8. Solutions must incorporate equality of opportunity for all students in Ontario to participate in co-instructional activities.
9. Solutions must allow for local flexibility within a provincial framework.

We kept these principles in mind in considering options and in drafting our recommendations. We also were mindful of something education partners told us repeatedly during our consultations: that unless the key challenges of respect, time, and resources are addressed, no solution to the co-instructional activities issue will be sustainable.

3.2 Options Considered

From our consultations with education partners in Ontario and our research on co-instructional activity delivery models in other jurisdictions, we identified six options for addressing Ontario's co-instructional activities crisis. While we ultimately found that none of these options on its own met all of our guiding principles and offered a long-term solution, we record them here to indicate the range of actions we considered and their advantages and disadvantages.

Option 1: Do nothing

Maintaining the status quo is always an option.

Advantage

- No additional financial costs.

Disadvantages

- Continues the current "corrosive climate," as the Education Improvement Commission described it, of education labour relations in this province. (Education Improvement Commission, *The Road Ahead – V: A Report on Improving Student Achievement*, 5.) The public will perceive government as having failed community expectations.
- Fails to provide all Ontario students with equality of opportunity to participate in these activities. Boards and schools now offer different levels of co-instructional activity. Our consultation indicated that as each semester passes, the level of participation by teachers in co-instructional activities is declining in all schools and boards. Eventually, most students will not have access to any co-instructional activities.
- Leaves teachers' unions with the option of using withdrawal of services from co-instructional activities as a bargaining tactic.
- Risks a situation where teachers who participate in co-instructional activities will become rare exceptions, not the norm.
- Risks losing the valuable contributions of community volunteers, since co-instructional activities may not be offered at all.
- Encourages development of alternative delivery models, many of which will not be in the best interests of students.

Clearly, this option does not satisfy our guiding principles or offer an effective, sustainable solution.

Option 2: Community delivery of co-instructional activities for students

Under this option, the community would take complete responsibility for delivering and managing many co-instructional activities. Provincial organizations (such as the Ontario Basketball Association) and municipal parks and recreation departments would take the lead. Teachers would no longer participate, unless they were involved in provincial or municipal organizations.

Advantages

- May succeed in retaining some co-instructional activities in some school communities.
- May offer qualified leaders for co-instructional activities, as some community organizations have experts on staff or otherwise involved.
- Eliminates as a bargaining tactic the withdrawal of services from those co-instructional activities offered by community groups.

Disadvantages

- Reduces the range of co-instructional activities offered. First, community providers cannot conduct parent-teacher interviews or provide academic help to students. Second, many activities could be lost because volunteers or community groups are only available for high-profile activities, such as football or drama.
- Fails to provide all Ontario students with equality of opportunity to participate in co-instructional activities. Geographic and demographic differences among Ontario communities would lead to discrepancies in the variety and quality of the programs offered. For example, small or remote communities may have fewer community organizations that can take on co-instructional activities. Parents in some communities may be less able to volunteer because of cultural differences, income levels, or issues of accessibility.
- Eliminates opportunities for teachers and students to form the bonds that result from teacher-led co-instructional activities.
- Reduces significantly or may eliminate the possibility that educational values and links to curriculum will be integrated into the delivery of co-instructional activities, since teachers will not be involved.
- May result in the loss of some traditions (for example, historic school teams).
- May be difficult to find volunteers to coach or otherwise lead activities at times that are most suitable for students.
- Would likely increase costs to government, as funding may have to be injected into community-led activities through, for example, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.
- Would require extensive screening of volunteers to ensure student safety, which would be costly. In any case, parents' level of confidence in the ability of volunteers may still be low.

This option does not satisfy our guiding principles. While it may provide some opportunities in some communities, we are particularly concerned about the inequality of opportunity that would occur as a result of demographic and geographic differences.

As we noted in section 2 above, all the education partners we heard from had serious concerns about community volunteers managing the delivery of co-instructional activities. These concerns included many of the disadvantages we have listed.

We believe that, in the future, school boards and community organizations will cooperate in the delivery of co-instructional activities to maximize resources and to reduce duplication of services. This kind of cooperation will enhance co-instructional activities, and we encourage it. Community support of co-instructional activities is valuable and desirable. We believe, however, and the education partners with whom we consulted told us that they also believe, that community delivery of co-instructional activities, without teacher leadership, is not an educationally sound or a viable option.

Option 3: Pay teachers to provide co-instructional leadership

Under this option, boards would develop job criteria and pay scales for a variety of co-instructional activities. Teachers would be "hired" to lead activities and they would sign contracts that set out their responsibilities.

Advantages

- Assures qualified leadership for co-instructional activities, as teachers would have to meet the job criteria to be "hired."
- Eliminates the option for teachers to use withdrawal of services from co-instructional activities as a bargaining tactic, since their provision of these services would be contractual.
- Provides local flexibility.
- Offers a sustainable (long-term) solution.
- Meets student needs.

Disadvantages

- Does not have the support of teachers, students, or any group with which we met.
- Increases costs to government.
- May create inequities between teachers at the elementary level, where there are fewer co-instructional activities, and those at the secondary level, where there are many co-instructional activities.
- Contributes to the loss of the spirit and goodwill of volunteerism.
- May lead to distorted values (for example, coaching sports may become "win at any cost").
- Fails to address or resolve teacher workload and time issues.

This option does not satisfy enough of our guiding principles to be offered as a recommendation.

Option 4: Enhance co-instructional activities in the key areas of respect, time, resources, and community involvement

The Ministry of Education, district school boards, and schools would cooperate to enhance aspects of the current system. As a result of these enhancements, teachers would be more inclined to participate in co-instructional activities and would have more time to participate; boards and schools would have more resources for co-instructional activities; and community volunteers would be encouraged to support teacher leaders.

Below we examine the advantages and disadvantages of each of the four aspects. Overall advantages and disadvantages are summarized at the end.

Respect

To raise the level of public respect and value for the teaching profession, the Ministry of Education would:

- repeal the unproclaimed sections of the Education Accountability Act, 2000 (Bill 74), that are related to making participation in co-instructional activities a mandatory part of teachers' responsibilities
- develop, in partnership with the Ontario College of Teachers and teachers' unions, a campaign to promote the teaching profession
- develop provincial awards programs that recognize teachers' participation in co-instructional activities.

Advantage

- Publicly recognizes and promotes the value of the teaching profession.

Disadvantage

- Requires additional government funding to finance the campaign and recognition programs.

Time

To provide teachers with more time to participate in co-instructional activities:

- the Ministry of Education would restore some professional development days for teachers
- the Ministry of Education would expand the number of half-credit courses available to students, some of which could include activities that are now considered co-instructional (such as working on student councils or on the school yearbook)
- with the implementation of the above point, boards would be in a better position to assign only one teacher to teach a full-credit course, thereby ending the current practice of having two teachers share this responsibility (as we noted earlier, this practice has resulted in some teachers teaching courses outside their areas of expertise, which is pedagogically unsound)
- boards and schools would be encouraged to restructure the school day and/or the school year to ensure that teachers have time for planning and marking within the school day.

Advantages

- Has the potential to reduce teachers' workloads to a small degree.
- Offers teachers daily, in-school, untouchable planning and marking time, which, by freeing up after-school time, may encourage teachers to participate in co-instructional activities.
- Resolves the issue of teachers sharing full-credit courses, which, as we have noted, often results in their teaching subjects outside their areas of expertise.

- Offers students more optional courses, such as art, music, and physical education, as well as potential half-credit courses for activities such as working on the school yearbook, and so on.
- May prove advantageous to teachers in French-language boards, which tend to have many co-instructional activities, and to those in Catholic boards, which have compulsory credits on top of core courses.

Disadvantage

- Requires boards to hire more teachers to permit all teachers to have more planning and marking time, thereby requiring increased government funding.

Resources

To ensure adequate funds for the provision of co-instructional activities, the Ministry of Education would establish in the education funding formula a specific envelope (line item) for costs related to co-instructional activities, such as board and school activity coordinators, transportation, and occasional teachers. These funds would be available for co-instructional purposes only, and could not be moved to other areas of board and school operations.

Advantages

- Provides boards with resources for the provision of co-instructional activities.
- Emphasizes the importance of co-instructional activities through the provision of a specific funding envelope.

Disadvantage

- Increases costs to government.

Community involvement

Community volunteers would continue to play an important role in the provision of co-instructional activities, providing support to teacher leaders. School councils and their individual members would also play a very active role, since new government regulations require boards and schools to consult school councils on a range of matters. To support community volunteers, the Ministry of Education would establish volunteer training standards, and district school boards or provincial organizations would implement training programs for volunteers. To ensure that the educational needs of students are met, student and parent representatives would sit on provincial and local committees related to the provision of co-instructional activities.

Advantages

- Keeps communities involved and supports community volunteers.
- May encourage more volunteers through the offer of training.
- Ensures high level of volunteer support through training.

Disadvantage

- Requires funding for training programs, which will increase government's costs.

Overall, action on the four aspects of respect, time, resources, and community involvement offers the following combined advantages and disadvantages:

Combined advantages

- Offers some support to teachers and boards to facilitate teachers' participation in co-instructional activities.
- Offers students more opportunities to earn credits in optional areas.
- Offers local flexibility within provincial standards.

Combined disadvantages

- Does not completely resolve the time and workload issues facing teachers, and therefore may not raise teachers' involvement in co-instructional activities to traditional levels.
- May not eliminate the use of withdrawal of services from co-instructional activities as a bargaining tactic.
- Presents increased costs to government.

This option alone would not solve the co-instructional crisis, particularly as it does not resolve the key issues of time and workload. It does, however, contain potential solutions to several of the challenges of providing co-instructional activities.

Option 5: Determine the activities that should be considered part of the mandatory duties of a teacher, to ensure that all of Ontario's students have access to a full and well-rounded educational experience

The Ministry of Education, trustee associations, and teachers' unions would work together to answer the following questions: What are the work expectations of the teaching profession, both within and outside the school day? What activities should be considered voluntary? What should be considered mandatory?

This examination could result in a reworking of the definitions of instructional and co-instructional duties. Some of what are now considered voluntary activities, such as offering additional assistance to students, attending parent-teacher interviews, and attending graduation ceremonies, for example, may be deemed mandatory duties. Teachers could not withdraw from mandatory duties as a collective bargaining tactic prior to being in a legal strike position.

Advantages

- Clarifies for the community the public expectations of teachers.
- Sets the stage for a long-term solution by using a cooperative process to arrive at new definitions.
- Initiates a healthier labour relations climate in education, with the public seeing teachers' unions and government working together.

- Provides a clear accountability framework for a teacher's work, allowing it to be measured and evaluated.
- Ensures that students will have access to co-instructional activities that are deemed essential to their educational experience by eliminating teachers' ability to withdraw services from certain activities as a bargaining tactic prior to being in a legal strike position.

Disadvantages

- Involves significant difficulties in getting all parties to agree on what constitutes a teacher's mandatory duties.
- May require additional teachers and therefore involve increased costs to government.

In spite of the significant difficulties in getting all parties to agree on what constitutes a teacher's mandatory duties, this option constitutes an essential component of an effective resolution of the current crisis (not a solution on its own). We believe that, until the duties of a teacher are re-examined and redefined, no other solutions to the co-instructional crisis will work. Without clear agreement on definitions of a teacher's mandatory responsibilities with respect to co-instructional activities, there will continue to be ambiguity about what is and is not voluntary. There will also, therefore, continue to be ambiguity about the activities from which teachers can withdraw as a bargaining tactic prior to being in a legal strike position.

Clear definitions of the mandatory duties of a teacher would go a long way towards bringing harmony, stability, and healing to the education system. Most important, clear definitions will ensure that students have access to co-instructional activities that are deemed by all groups to be essential to their educational experience.

Option 6: Credit teacher participation in co-instructional activities

To encourage teachers to volunteer for co-instructional activities, boards would provide recognition for these services in assigning teachers their workload. For example, boards could make some co-instructional activities "credit-equivalent," and these activities could become part of a teacher's prescribed workload and therefore a contractual responsibility. The decision to participate in co-instructional activities would remain voluntary, but once a teacher made the decision to participate and received credit for the time, participation in that activity could not be withdrawn as a bargaining tactic prior to being in a legal strike position.

Advantages

- Resolves workload and time issues, thereby providing teachers with more time to participate in co-instructional activities.
- Could restore teacher participation in co-instructional activities to traditional levels.
- Offers equality of opportunity to participate in co-instructional activities to students across Ontario.

- Offers a sustainable solution to the current issue.
- Eliminates teachers' ability to use withdrawal from some co-instructional activities as a bargaining tactic.
- Offers local flexibility, in that boards could determine, within the scope of provincial guidelines, the activities to which they would assign credit status.

Disadvantages

- Requires more teachers at a time of teacher shortage.
- Increases costs to government because of need for additional teachers.
- Involves significant difficulties in reaching consensus on the activities that could be recognized as part of a teacher's workload, especially in the absence of clear definitions of a teacher's mandatory duties.

This option could also contribute to an effective, sustainable solution, as it meets our guiding principles. To work, however, it requires clear definitions of the activities that are part of a teacher's mandatory duties.

3.3 Recommendations

Our first guiding principle – that students must be the focus of any solution – was, as we said earlier in this report, foremost in our minds when we developed the following recommendations. It is our greatest hope that this report and its recommendations will serve students well.

Our recommendations are based on our consultations with 21 district school boards and 25 education partner groups, our research into national and international delivery models for co-instructional activities, and our study of written submissions from 87 additional interested groups and individuals.

We heard from all groups and sources that the issues of respect, time, and resources are critical to the successful provision of co-instructional activities. All groups told us that the provision of co-instructional activities should remain voluntary. They also told us that community volunteers should complement the work of teacher leaders in the provision of co-instructional activities. No groups support the idea of having community volunteers completely manage the delivery of co-instructional activities.

Options 4, 5, and 6 all have merit. Each offers a partial solution to the co-instructional issue in Ontario, but none provides an answer on its own. Together, however, these options present a workable and sustainable solution that would serve students well, satisfy our guiding principles, and address key concerns about respect, time, resources, and community involvement.

Recommendations 1 and 2 are vital to a long term, sustainable solution to the co-instructional activities issue in Ontario. They will take time to implement, but we believe that unless they are implemented, no other actions will yield a workable or sustainable long-term solution.

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Recommendation 1:

That the Ministry of Education, district school boards, and teachers' unions immediately and collaboratively undertake to define the professional duties and responsibilities of teachers.

Expectations of what constitutes a teacher's work vary. It is clear to us that before any other solutions to the co-instructional activities issue are implemented a teacher's work must be defined, with mandatory duties and voluntary responsibilities clearly spelled out. These definitions cannot be made unilaterally. All parties must reach consensus on this vital issue. *We believe that unless this first recommendation is implemented, none of our other recommendations will yield a sustainable solution.*

We strongly encourage all parties to consider the following responsibilities and tasks when defining a teacher's work:

- providing additional assistance to students
- conducting parent-teacher interviews
- participating in school "open houses"
- attending student graduations
- attending staff meetings
- providing leadership in curriculum development
- writing letters of support for students applying to colleges and universities and for scholarships
- mentoring new teachers
- completing report cards on time and in the detail prescribed.

Recommendation 2:

That schools and boards recognize, in assigning a secondary school teacher's workload, that teachers need time to participate in co-instructional activities.

Planning, marking, and professional development activities all take place after school, competing with the time teachers could spend on co-instructional activities. The workload assigned to teachers must provide them with time to volunteer for co-instructional activities.

All the education partners with whom we met told us that time must be part of the solution. The other jurisdictions we researched accommodate the time required to participate in co-instructional activities as an integral part of their delivery models. Historically, education systems in Ontario and in other parts of Canada have recognized that teachers require time to participate in co-instructional activities.

Time could be recognized in a variety of ways.

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Time could be recognized in a variety of ways.

For example, teachers could receive credit for up to 0.5 periods of instructional time for participating in co-instructional activities. In this model, the definition of instructional time would be broadened to include a variety of activities that would be considered for credit (that is, as equivalent to instructional time). The average teacher workload would remain at the provincially required level of 6.67 periods out of 8. Those teachers who were involved in co-instructional activities would receive up to 0.5 periods of credit against their workload, while those teachers who were not involved in co-instructional activities would teach the full 6.67 periods.

In such a model, a wide range of defined activities could be considered for credit. The Ministry of Education would establish, in policy guidelines, the criteria for co-instructional activities that are deemed integral to the education outcomes desired by the province, and therefore appropriate to be used as credits. District school boards would develop their own co-instructional programs based on ministry guidelines. School principals would consider teacher expertise and qualifications and community needs when assigning co-instructional activities to teachers. School councils would provide input into local decision making.

A variation of the above model is one in which the education funding formula would provide, under a new co-instructional activities category, for one additional full-time teacher for every 25 full-time teachers at a secondary school. Schools would have an additional teacher on whom to rely when they develop their timetables. Schools could then cover teachers participating in co-instructional activities, allowing them to each teach 6.17 periods out of 8, instead of 6.67.

Under this model, school principals would consult with school councils about how best to allocate the remaining half-periods to provide a substantial co-instructional program. Teachers who volunteered to participate in co-instructional activities would sign a mini-contract covering their involvement in these activities, and they would provide the principal and school council, as part of their contract, with a profile of how they would carry out their co-instructional activity.

Many more such solutions may exist.

We repeat: Unless recommendation 1 is implemented – that is, until a teacher's work is defined and what constitutes mandatory versus voluntary duties is clear to all groups – recommendation 2 will not yield a workable or sustainable solution.

Once a teacher's work is defined, recognizing time for co-instructional activities in a teacher's workload would remove withdrawal from these activities as a bargaining tactic. Credited voluntary activities would become part of a teacher's prescribed workload, and therefore would not be subject to selective withdrawal of services. The decision to participate in the co-instructional activity would be voluntary, but once the decision was made and the time credited, the decision would become contractual. *Therefore, the implementation of both recommendations 1 and 2 would successfully remove co-instructional activities as a bargaining tactic.*

Recommendations 2 and 3 should be implemented together, as both aim to provide teachers with more time to participate in co-instructional activities – recommendation 2 at the secondary level and recommendation 3 at the elementary level.

Recommendation 3:

That the Ministry of Education provide funding at the elementary school level for lunchroom supervision, so that elementary school teachers would have more time to volunteer for intramural activities; and that school boards consider making use of volunteers to perform lunchroom supervision duties.

Most elementary school children remain at school for lunch, and lunchroom supervision is therefore essential. Most elementary school intramural activities also take place at lunchtime. When teachers supervise lunchrooms, they are unable to participate in intramural activities, which would be a more valuable use of their time.

Recommendations 4 through 7 can, and should, be implemented immediately. Although they will not by themselves provide a sustainable solution, they are short-term actions that will improve the current climate.

Recommendation 4:

That participation in co-instructional activities remain voluntary for teachers, and that the Ministry of Education withdraw the unproclaimed sections of the Education Accountability Act, 2000 (Bill 74), that are related to making co-instructional activities a mandatory part of teachers' responsibilities.

In our travels across Ontario, we heard from *all* groups that participation in co-instructional activities should be voluntary on the part of teachers. People believe that making co-instructional activities mandatory for teachers is not workable, and would not result in satisfying co-instructional programs for students. They also believe that such a move would diminish the spirit of volunteerism that is such a positive part of our culture.

Recommendation 5:

That teachers' unions recognize the negative impact on students when they consider using withdrawal of services from co-instructional activities as a bargaining tactic.

Lack of access to co-instructional activities adversely affects students by depriving them of important education-related experiences, such as those we enumerated in section 1.1 of this report: opportunities to develop character, critical thinking skills, social skills, and talents, and to learn first-hand the importance of teamwork, responsibility, commitment, and hard work. Although students are not party to the current education labour dispute, they are the ones who are suffering now and whose future prospects may be diminished by lack of access to positive co-instructional learning experiences.

Most of the students and parents from whom we heard believe that the current withdrawal of services is "unprofessional" on the part of teachers. Many of those who participated in our consultation believe that the current situation is contributing to an even greater decline in an already low level of public respect for teachers.

Teachers themselves have told us that they have found their past participation in co-instructional activities to be both satisfying and rewarding. We believe that they also want the issue to be resolved, and we therefore urge them to consider the effect on their students of withdrawing services and to reconsider this bargaining tactic.

Recommendation 6:

That, given that teachers' unions believe that teachers' participation in co-instructional activities is voluntary, and given that those teachers who do participate in co-instructional activities voluntarily choose to do so, teachers' unions urge their members not to place pressure on fellow members who choose to participate in co-instructional activities.

In view of the "givens" that we have set out in this recommendation, we believe that it is unprofessional for teachers to place pressure on colleagues who choose – under what everyone we heard from agrees are difficult conditions – to provide their services to students.

At the same time, we do not believe that a teacher's workload should be increased by having to cover for another teacher who is involved in co-instructional activities during the school day. Rather, an occasional teacher should be assigned to cover for the absent teacher. Recommendation 15 discusses the need for funding for this kind of occasional-teacher coverage.

Recommendation 7:

That the Ontario government, the Ministry of Education, the Ontario College of Teachers, and the teachers' unions in Ontario collaborate on the development of strategies that promote respect for the teaching profession.

It is clear that we need to restore public respect for the teaching profession. A significant collaborative effort on the part of the above-mentioned groups is vital. Many "good news" stories exist that could be shared with the public. Provincial awards programs could be developed to recognize teachers' participation in co-instructional activities. Not only do current teachers need to feel valued, both by government and the public, but prospective teachers need to hear this message as well.

"Currently, we are facing a looming crisis of a shortage of teachers. School boards are already finding it difficult to attract and keep all the qualified teachers required by our schools. The work life of a teacher must be seen as appealing. Teaching needs to be perceived as an attractive profession when people are making career decisions." (Ontario Teachers' Federation)

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Recommendations 8 through 13 will take more time to be implemented. We believe, however, that they will alleviate many of the challenges to providing co-instructional activities.

Recommendation 8:

That, given the current Ministry of Education definition of instructional time at the secondary school level, district school boards ensure that the school day and the school year are organized (timetabled) in individual boards so as to provide each teacher with daily planning and marking time within the 300 minutes of instruction required in each school day.

School boards and schools have the flexibility to change the school day and school year to accommodate teachers' daily planning and marking time. They should exercise this flexibility to provide teachers with more time for after-school co-instructional activities. Examples of changes to the school day that would accomplish this goal include de-semestering school years and instituting five 60-minute periods per day in conjunction with "tumbling timetables" (timetables that vary from five-day to six-day cycles). We point out, however, that we have serious concerns about the educational soundness of increasing the length of individual classes.

Recommendation 9:

That the Ministry of Education develop standards for the training and orientation of community volunteers in co-instructional activities, and that such training and orientation be delivered at school and board levels.

Recommendation 10:

That the Ministry of the Solicitor General, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, investigate ways to eliminate the charges for conducting criminal-record checks of parents and community members who volunteer for co-instructional activities.

Recommendation 11:

That parents and students be represented on co-instructional activity committees/associations at both the local and provincial levels.

Recommendation 12:

That school boards and municipalities make every effort to coordinate their resources and to work cooperatively to enhance both school co-instructional activities and community programs.

Recommendation 13:

That the Ontario College of Teachers develop criteria for courses in the leadership of co-instructional activities, and that faculties of education develop and teach such courses to prepare teachers for leadership in a range of co-instructional activities.

Recommendations 14 through 16 have financial implications, including a recommendation that, if implemented, could free up teachers as well as funds for co-instructional activities.

Recommendation 14:

That the Ministry of Education restore three professional development days for elementary and secondary teachers, to be used for professional development related to new and ongoing provincial initiatives.

At present, most in-service (professional development) activities related to initiatives such as the new curriculum, province-wide student testing, and new report cards take place after school. More professional development days would free up after-school time for teachers to participate in co-instructional activities.

Recommendation 15:

That the Ministry of Education provide an envelope (line item) in the education funding formula for co-instructional activities, to support activity coordinators (school, board, and inter-board), transportation related to co-instructional activities (including late buses), and occasional-teacher coverage for teachers who are absent because they are delivering or participating in co-instructional activities during the school day; and further, that in developing this envelope for co-instructional activities, the ministry consult with school board associations and school council representatives.

Recommendation 16:

That, in light of the current teacher shortage and the changing financial picture in the province, the Ministry of Education return the board-wide average secondary school class size to 22, in order to free up funding for co-instructional activities.

The vast majority of education partners with whom we consulted told us that the government's reduction of the board-wide average secondary school class size to 21 students has not made a difference in the quality of student education. We suggest that the government increase the board-wide average secondary school class size to 22 students for a trial period of two years, thereby freeing up funds to help pay for the delivery of co-instructional activities. By freeing up the teaching staff now used to cover the reduction in class size, this action would also support Recommendation 2, which requires more teachers. It could also help alleviate the current teacher shortage. In two years, the ministry could re-examine the class size issue.

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3.4 Other Key Issues

We heard from education partners about some other major issues that, although not directly related to our mandate, warrant mention. We encourage the Ministry of Education and other education partners to consider the following additional suggestions:

- **Re-examine the Teacher Advisor Program (TAP).** We heard from many groups that TAP, whereby teachers are assigned to advise individual students about future courses of study, is not working past Grade 9. If TAP were eliminated after Grade 9, secondary school teachers could spend the time they now devote to TAP to providing additional assistance to students in all secondary grades and/or to participating in other co-instructional activities.
- **Consider developing half-credit courses at the Grade 11 and 12 levels in optional areas of the curriculum.** These kinds of courses would benefit students who wish to take additional non-core courses in the arts and physical education, but who feel they cannot do so because such courses would compete with their core course requirements.
- **Consider asking the Teachers Pension Plan to allow retired teachers to teach more than the current limit of 90 days for two years, and to consider removing the two-year limit entirely.** This measure would help to resolve the shortage of occasional teachers, who are needed to cover for teachers who need to be out of school for co-instructional activities.
- **Create a provincial body to coordinate all co-instructional activities.** At present, the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) is the only provincial umbrella organization coordinating co-instructional activities, but all co-instructional activities would benefit from the kind of coordination it provides. The role of the OFSAA could be expanded, or an alternative organization could be created.

4. Conclusion

Our goal in this report is to serve students first. Students deserve opportunities to expand their minds and develop new skills by playing in their school bands, participating in art exhibits and theatrical performances, writing for their school newsletters, and playing team sports. They deserve to have teachers attend their graduation ceremonies, help them win scholarships, and help them gain admission to universities or colleges. Students should not be punished because government, district school boards, and teachers' unions cannot resolve their differences.

Students, parents, teachers, and district school boards all want Ontario's teachers to resume volunteering for co-instructional activities. The desire is there; the will to make it happen must follow.

We realize that our recommendations call for major changes in the policies of the Ministry of Education, district school boards, and teachers' unions and for the expenditure of additional public money, but it is crucial that all parties fulfil their responsibilities to the students of Ontario and take concrete steps to resolve this crisis.

We urge the Minister of Education, trustee associations, and teachers' unions to meet as soon as possible to discuss this report and its recommendations. There is an urgency to begin implementing solutions *now*, so that another school year does not go by in which students are deprived of some of the most rewarding experiences of their educational careers.

5. List of Recommendations

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- Recommendation 2:** That schools and boards recognize, in assigning a secondary school teacher's workload, that teachers need time to participate in co-instructional activities.
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- Recommendation 4:** That participation in co-instructional activities remain voluntary for teachers, and that the Ministry of Education withdraw the unproclaimed sections of the Education Accountability Act, 2000 (Bill 74), that are related to making co-instructional activities a mandatory part of teachers' responsibilities.
- Recommendation 5:** That teachers' unions recognize the negative impact on students when they consider using withdrawal of services from co-instructional activities as a bargaining tactic.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Biographies of the Members of the Minister's Advisory Group on the Provision of Co-instructional Activities

K. Douglas Brown, Chair

Douglas Brown is a member of the governing council of the Ontario College of Teachers and a commissioner of the Education Relations Commission. He is a former chair of the Town of Southampton Police Commission.

Before retiring in 1998, Brown was a teacher and principal in Bruce County, Ontario, for more than 30 years. During that time, he served on many board committees, including the transition years steering committee, the teacher assessment and evaluation committee, and the secondary school reform committee. Brown was also president of the Bluewater (Bruce) Secondary Administrators' Association from 1994–98, and served as district 44 president, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, in 1976.

Ernie Checkeris

Ernie Checkeris is a member of the governing council of the Ontario College of Teachers and a governor of Thorneloe University, part of Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario. Checkeris has received the Order of Ontario.

Checkeris served as a school board trustee in Sudbury for 55 years. He is a past president of both the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and the Canadian School Boards Association. He was also involved with the Ontario Education Leadership Centre and has served on numerous advisory groups, including the Hall-Dennis committee (the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario), which produced the influential report *Living and Learning* (1968), the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism (late 1970s), and the Ontario Bicentennial Advisory Commission (1984).

Cathy Cove

Cathy Cove is the director of Parent Network Ontario, a nonprofit provincial parent organization that promotes the interests of parents in Ontario's education system. Cove is also an active member of the safe school committee at her children's school in Goderich, Ontario. She was recently appointed to the Ontario Parent Council.

Colin Hood

Colin Hood is the executive director of the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations. Previously, he was employed as senior consultant for a leisure planning company, assistant director of parks and recreation for the town of Oakville, and special assistant to an assistant deputy minister of the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation.

Hood began his career as a teacher of physical education in England, and later taught phys ed in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He also taught for four years at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He holds many coaching qualifications.

Matthew Walker

Matthew Walker is a Grade 12 student at M.M. Robinson High School in Burlington, Ontario. An honour roll student, Walker is also an active member of his school's senior concert and jazz bands and the Burlington All-City High School Jazz Band. Walker is also a partner in an on-line computer company.

Appendix B: Overview of the Provision of Co-instructional Activities at 21 District School Boards

English-language District School Boards

Durham District School Board

This board has been without co-instructional activity at the secondary level for three years. We heard that secondary teachers are bitter after an arbitrated settlement in 1998 that imposed a 6.5-period instruction workload and no wage increase. It is doubtful that, even with workload adjustments, co-instructional activity will recommence quickly at the secondary level.

In contrast, elementary schools offer a wide range of co-instructional activities. The local Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario affiliate is very proud of the level of sports and cultural activities in the board's elementary schools, and provides funds for sports leadership development from union resources. It also funds additional supply teachers to enable teachers to attend science fairs, music festivals, and sports championships.

While the Durham board has a facilitator to organize co-instructional activities and a policy manual on the use of volunteers, there is little active recruitment of volunteers.

Greater Essex County District School Board

Co-instructional activities at the secondary level are about half that of past years. The level varies from school to school. Teachers who do volunteer participate during the semester in which they have an instruction workload of three periods out of four.

The board has experienced difficult negotiations with its teachers in the last two rounds of collective bargaining, and only achieved its current settlement with secondary teachers when it threatened a lockout. Students told us that they feel things will get worse before they improve. Teachers told us that they feel that the Ministry of Education has introduced too many changes too fast.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

This board recently experienced a very difficult elementary teachers strike that ended when the teachers were legislated back to work. Elementary teachers told us that their participation in co-instructional activities has dropped significantly, and that it may be a long time before traditional levels of activity resume.

At the secondary level, the overall level of co-instructional activities is about 75 per cent of previous years' levels. Level of activity varies widely across this board. Some schools have few co-instructional activities, while others offer them at traditional levels. The number of games played and the amount of time teachers spend with students have both dropped significantly. Students and administrative staff spoke of friction in staff rooms, and of pressures placed on those teachers who choose to volunteer. We were also informed that the current activities are not of the same "quality" as in previous years.

Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board

This small board boasts of having a proud tradition of building good relationships with its teachers. In fall 2000, however, co-instructional activity levels were at about 70 per cent of the previous year's levels. Present levels are 50 per cent of those of previous years, and declining. Teacher burnout was mentioned as a major factor in this decline in service.

The local athletic association is functioning with the help of a central-office coordinator. Association members told us they feel that if co-instructional activities are important, their importance should be recognized by providing them with resources.

Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board

The co-instructional activity level at this board is 15 to 20 per cent that of previous years. There is no district athletic association; school department heads manage local athletic activities. Increased teacher workload was the primary factor cited for both the decline in the level of co-instructional activities and the lack of teacher participation in them. Elementary school representatives reported a significant decline in participation levels by their teachers.

Lakehead District School Board

Although this board says it believes it has a positive relationship with its teachers, its schools have little co-instructional activity. The board established a policy on the use of volunteers and a task force that is studying the co-instructional activities issue. To date, the board has had some success in recruiting volunteers from the community and local colleges who have organized some sports activities (but no league games). Drama and music co-instructional activities are functioning at a more active level than sports.

Teachers told us that there are fewer teachers in each school to support a full range of activities, and that each teacher has a heavier instruction workload. As well, they said, teachers with young families want to be home with their families after school. Some students told us that after three successive years of interruptions in co-instructional activities, they are becoming cynical.

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

Co-instructional activity levels are significantly lower now than in the past. In some schools, parent volunteers are the only people providing co-instructional activities to students. Of 255 sports teams, 180 are coached by non-teachers.

The board has a policy for training community volunteers, but it faces challenges in recruiting the volunteers it needs. This situation creates inequities in the level of activities provided across the board. In its less affluent areas, the board says, it finds it impossible to attract community or parent volunteers. Some teams – girls' and junior teams in particular – have difficulty attracting volunteers. We also heard that some parent volunteers are frustrated with supervision guidelines.

Elementary teachers told us that the work involved with the new curriculum is making it increasingly difficult for them to volunteer as much as they did in the past. Teachers across the board report that they are experiencing higher stress levels and making more long-term disability claims. Teachers who continue to volunteer for co-instructional activities report that they are affected the most. The board expressed an urgent need to resolve the issue.

Rainbow District School Board

Board administrators stressed their belief in the importance of co-instructional activities as part of developing "the whole child." They believe that teachers who voluntarily participate in co-instructional activities should be recognized and rewarded.

Elementary teachers are providing a full range of activities, but report that with the new curriculum, new report cards, and province-wide assessments, they are getting tired. They told us that "there is not enough time for the fun things."

Some secondary teachers are volunteering for co-instructional activities, and the board is also recruiting community volunteers. Student councils have organized some intramural sports. Federation representatives reported an increased use of the employee assistance plan and sick leave among teachers, and said that 46 per cent of long-term disability claims from teachers are stress-related. Senior students told us that they worry about the effect on their lack of experience in co-instructional activities on their ability to gain acceptance to university and to win scholarships.

Thames Valley District School Board

Co-instructional activity levels at this board are about 10 per cent to 15 per cent of traditional levels. Very few teachers are volunteering; community volunteers lead some activities. The local athletic association is functioning, but it is dealing with increased discipline problems due, we were told, to the absence of teachers. The cost of lost equipment, for example, is becoming a major issue. Administrators told us that they are over-burdened by additional responsibilities as they try to fill the gap in co-instructional activities left by teachers.

All the education partners in this board claim, however, that they have excellent working relationships with one another, as they stated in a letter to the Minister of Education dated November 10, 2000, and signed by 13 partners, including the teachers' federations. These partners say that they had reached an agreement last June on how to resolve the co-instructional activities issue, but that Bill 74 stifled their efforts by "moving the goal posts." The board said that, under the circumstances, it finds it difficult to move forward.

Toronto District School Board

This board recently completed long and difficult negotiations with both elementary and secondary teachers' unions. In secondary schools, the level of co-instructional activity varies from school to school. Community volunteers and students councils provide some activities. In the elementary schools, co-instructional levels are close to traditional levels. Elementary sports teams, however, attend fewer competitions because of a lack of occasional teachers to cover teacher-coaches traveling to out-of-school sports events.

English-language Catholic District School Boards

Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board

This board has recently ended a work-to-rule campaign, and the situation is still sensitive. Teachers' involvement in co-instructional activities is starting to resume, and the level of activities is starting to increase. Students have established a "secret buddy" program, whereby they leave small gifts on teachers' desks to show their appreciation for teachers who volunteer to provide an activity.

This board and its coterminous Limestone District School Board have hired a joint athletic convenor to help structure and coordinate events in their eastern region.

District School Board 38 (London Catholic)

Co-instructional activities are operating at about half the board's traditional levels. All teams have teacher advisors and/or teacher coaches. We were told that teachers who volunteer face pressure from colleagues and the local athletic association to withdraw their services. These teachers expressed a great sense of urgency about resolving the co-instructional issue.

A model proposed by the Council of Ontario Directors of Education was put forward as a possible solution to the problem, but all education partners at this board agree that consultation and dialogue among the partners must occur if this model is to be accepted. Providing more time for teachers to do their work was seen as crucial.

Durham Catholic District School Board

Like the Durham District School Board, the Durham Catholic board has been without co-instructional activities at the secondary level for the past three years. Some secondary schools have a few activities, supported by teachers with children in those schools, parent volunteers, and student leaders.

The rapid rate of growth of the student population at this board has also affected the delivery of co-instructional activities. Two schools each have 38 portables, another school is operating from a split campus, and two new schools and two new additions to schools are being built. To cope with crowded facilities, a "floating" five-period day has been established, with half of the students starting early and the other half finishing late. This schedule makes it difficult to provide after-school co-instructional activities.

Elementary school co-instructional activity levels are close to traditional levels.

Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board

This board offers a full range of co-instructional activities, involving both teachers and community volunteers. While fewer teachers are involved in co-instructional activities than in the past, teachers are supportive of the use of volunteers. Students respect and appreciate their teachers' volunteer time. Students, teachers, federation representatives, and principals all attribute the positive atmosphere and wide level of teacher participation in co-instructional activities to the director of education. We were told that the director has an open, cooperative relationship with staff, and that she has built a trusting environment in which individual contributions are recognized and celebrated.

The board reports that it considers time to be a major concern. The administration proposed that the school day be restructured so that there are five periods of instruction per day, each one hour long. A credit would require 90 hours of study. Each teacher would teach four credits per day, with an hour lunch and an hour spare period. Students could take 40 credits over four years, with more optional credits for music, physical education, art, and theatre arts (subjects that must compete, under the new curriculum, for time with core courses).

Niagara Catholic District School Board

In past negotiations, this board's teachers have worked to rule, but the board now says that it has a positive working relationship with its teachers. Trustees emphasized the need to respect and appreciate teachers. All co-instructional activities are taking place, but not in all schools and, with respect to athletics, not always at both midget and junior levels. There is no mentoring of new teachers in co-instructional activities. Junior programs have been the most negatively affected. For each of the three sports seasons, the board has hired athletic convenors, who organize leagues and schedule events. The board shares the cost of the convenors with its coterminous English-language board.

While a high level of activities is taking place, the situation is fragile and there are no guarantees that the board will be able to maintain this level for the 2001-02 school year.

Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board

This board, in a high-growth area of the province, has maintained a good level of co-instructional activity. Teachers have had a positive relationship with the board following the establishment of a two-year contract in June 2000. We were told that many new, younger teachers bring energy and enthusiasm to a wide range of co-instructional activities. The board is supportive, providing 100 days of supply-teacher coverage to help cover teachers who must be absent during the school day to lead co-instructional activities.

The board told us, however, that while on the surface things may look good, the rate of teacher absenteeism is "way up," as is use by teachers of the board's drug plan. The board is also concerned about the high costs of transportation, such as late buses, required to support co-instructional activities.

Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board

Some sports and social activities are still taking place, led by a few teachers and community volunteers. Students have taken leadership roles in developing intramural sports. Parents express concern about community volunteers and their qualifications, and worry about student safety. The board and its coterminous English-language board have formed a task force to study the provision of co-instructional activities within their jurisdictions. Administrators express confidence that the traditional level of co-instructional activities will return, but say that "time" and "appreciation" are keys to fixing the problem.

Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board

At this board, most co-instructional activities continue to operate in both elementary and secondary schools, but not at the same level of student participation. Principals told us that they will find it difficult to maintain the same level of teacher participation in September 2001. The board is working with the University of Windsor to develop training workshops for parent and community volunteer coaches.

Parents told us that they feel students thrive on co-instructional activities, and that these activities make a positive contribution to keeping students in school.

French-language Catholic District School Boards

Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud

In the opinion of the board's administrators, co-instructional activities continue at a high level in this board because a three-year collective agreement reached with teachers has brought labour peace.

The board believes that playing and competing in the French language is important to instilling pride in franco-Ontarian culture in students. The board covers a large geographic area, and a very high percentage of its students are bused to school. The board told us that it is therefore important that co-instructional activities take place during the school day, so that students can travel to other French-language schools to compete, and not be restricted to competing only with local English-language schools operated by coterminous boards.

Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien

This board also stressed the importance of students participating in co-instructional activities to the preservation of franco-Ontarian culture, and said that teachers should be provided with enough time to volunteer. Co-instructional activity levels in this board are significantly lower than in past years. Teachers have been teaching 6.25 periods out of 8, and we were told that the labour-relations climate is deteriorating as new contract negotiations approach.

Conseil scolaire de district catholique du Nouvel-Ontario

The board and parents take the position that students should learn the social and leadership skills associated with participation in co-instructional activities in a French-language environment. If these activities are not offered by their schools, students would be inclined to participate in community-run activities, which would likely be offered in English only.

This board and its teachers negotiated a 6.5-period workload in their first collective agreement. Teachers teach 4 out of 4 periods per day in one semester. They say that this is very tiring, and that they would not combine this instructional workload with co-instructional activities in the future. In an effort to reduce the 4-periods-per-day workload, the board has developed half-credit courses in the arts and physical education. As a result, teachers can teach 3.5-period days in each of two semesters.

The half-credit courses also provide students, who must take a large number of compulsory credits (including French, English, and religion), with the opportunity to participate in half-credit courses that support their involvement in co-instructional activities. In addition, because teachers have a half-period free, they are more likely to volunteer for co-instructional activities, thereby providing students with more co-instructional activity opportunities.

Appendix C: Education Partner Groups Consulted

English-language Groups

Students	OCSCF	Ontario Catholic Student Council Federation
	OSSSA	Ontario Secondary School Students' Association
Parents	OAPCE	Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education
	OFHSA	Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations
	OPC	Ontario Parent Council
Teachers	OECTA	Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association
	ETFO	Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
	OSSTF	Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation
	OTF	Ontario Teachers' Federation
Principals	CPCO	Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario
	OPC	Ontario Principals' Council
Supervisory Officers	OCSOA	Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association
	OPSOA	Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association
Directors	CODE	Council of Ontario Directors of Education
Trustees	OCSTA	Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
	OPSBA	Ontario Public School Boards' Association
	OSTA	Ontario Students Trustees' Association
Other		Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation

French-language Groups

Students	FESFO	Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontariens
Parents	PPE	Parents partenaires en éducation
Teachers	AEFO	Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens
Principals	ADFO	Association des directions et des directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariens
Supervisory Officers	ASFO	Association des agentes et agents de supervision franco-ontariens
Trustees	ACEPO	Association des conseillères et des conseillers des écoles publiques de l'Ontario
	AFOCSC	Association franco-ontariens des conseils scolaires catholiques

Appendix D: Organizations and Individuals That Presented Briefs and/or Provided Written Submissions*

Organizations Presenting Briefs

29 January 2001	Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association. Peter Askey, president	20 February 2001	Ontario Teachers' Federation
1 February 2001	Council of Ontario Directors of Education. Frank Kelly, executive secretary	20 February 2001	Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education
9 February 2001	Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association. Frank Kelly, executive director	20 February 2001	Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. James Smith, president, and Claire Ross, general secretary
9 February 2001	Ontario Public School Boards' Association. Elizabeth Sandals, president	20 February 2001	Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. Phyllis Benedict, president
13 February 2001	Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens. Lise Routhier-Boudreau, présidente	20 February 2001	Ontario Principals' Council
13 February 2001	Ontario Students Trustees' Association	20 February 2001	Ontario Secondary School Students' Association
13 February 2001	Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes. Armand Gagné, président	20 February 2001	Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations. Judy Watson, president
15 February 2001	Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association. Patrick V. Slack, executive director	21 February 2001	Parents partenaires en éducation. Dianne Ellis, présidente
		21 February 2001	Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. Earl Manners, president
		21 February 2001	Ontario Parent Council [verbal presentation only]

Organizations Submitting Written Briefs

School boards

23 January 2001	Durham District School Board. Elizabeth Roy, chairperson	7 February 2001	Rainbow District School Board. Gordon J. Ewin, director of education
25 January 2001	London District Catholic School Board. Patrick J. Dunne, director of education	9 February 2001	Rainy River District School Board. Warren Hoshizaki, director of education
7 February 2001	Rainbow District School Board. Doreen Dewar, chair	12 February 2001	Toronto District School Board

* Names are as presented on submissions.

13 February 2001	Peel District School Board. Harold Brathwaite, director of education	20 February 2001	Halton Catholic School Board. Fred L. Sweeney, director of education
15 February 2001	Ottawa-Carleton School Board. Julian Hanlon, superintendent of human resources	27 February 2001	Harbord Collegiate Institute School Council. Edith Kettle, chair
20 February 2001	Bluewater District School Board. Earl Farrell		

Schools, school councils, and committees

19 January 2001	Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils. Ken Slemko, co-chair, secondary school committee	15 February 2001	Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques. Lorraine Gandolfo, directrice générale
23 January 2001	Northern School Council. Marshall Kern, chairman	15 February 2001	Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School Council. Brenda Cassidy, chair
29 January 2001	Adam Scott C.V.I. and Intermediate School. David Myrvold, principal	16 February 2001	Stouffville High School Council. J.L. Macdonald and J. Howe, co-chairs
31 January 2001	Westgate C.V.I. School Council. Robert Workman, chair	19 February 2001	Park Street School Council. Sandra Wheeler-Dunleavey and Trudy Balko, co-chairs
5 February 2001	Sandwich Secondary School Council. Sue Harndon, chair	20 February 2001	Victoria Park Secondary School. Sue Lockington, co-chair
6 February 2001	Collège Notre Dame	21 February 2001	South Grenville District High School. Brenda Ramsay, chair
7 February 2001	Conseil d'école catholique St-Denis, Sudbury. Manon Lemonde, présidente	27 February 2001	Thornhill Secondary School Council. Nan Marie Wismer, chair
7 February 2001	Conseil scolaire de district catholique du Nouvel-Ontario. Hélène C. Chayer, director of education and secretary-treasurer	[no date] February 2001	Uxbridge Secondary School Community Council. Karyn Cotie, chair
8 February 2001	R.H. King Academy School Council. Coline Gardhouse, co-chair, and Anna Brackley, student council president	7 March 2001	Bishop P.F. Reding Roman Catholic Secondary School Council. John London, co-chair
11 February 2001	Archbishop Denis O'Connor School Council. Gerry McDonald, chair	7 March 2001	LCCVI School Council. Bonnie Tetreault, chair
12 February 2001	Oakridge Secondary School Council. Anne-Marie Thompson, chairperson	[no date] 2001	Fr. Leo J. Austin Catholic School Council. Anita Mensink, chair
14 February 2001	Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française du Centre-Est. Madelaine Chevalier, présidente		

Other organizations

15 January 2001	People for Education. Annie Kidder	9 February 2001	Toronto 2008 Olympic Bid. John Bitove, president and chief executive officer
30 January 2001	Professional Development Associates of Ontario. John Fredette, acting communica- tions officer	13 February 2001	Organisation of English Catholic Teachers' Associa- tion – Durham Secondary. Robert McDonnell, president
30 January 2001	Faculty of Physical Educa- tion and Health, University of Toronto. Bruce Kidd, profes- sor and dean	13 February 2001	Riverdale Collegiate Parent Council. Greg Staio, presi- dent, and Ellen Kert
30 January 2001	Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Sim- coe Muskoka unit. Catherine MacDonald, board chair	17 January 2001	Durham Coalition for Extra Curricular Activities. Jennifer S. Thomson, vice-president
30 January 2001	Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Sim- coe Muskoka Elementary unit	22 February 2001	Lakehead Elementary Teachers of Ontario. Chris Lofts, president
5 February 2001	People for Education. Annie Kidder	25 February 2001	Toronto Parent Network. Cathy Dandy
6 February 2001	Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Nia- gara unit. Tharon Nylander- Rodgers, president	1 March 2001	Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, district 18, teachers' bargaining unit. Gail Sanye, president. In joint submission with Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. Wellington County, Brenda McGinnis, president
6 February 2001	Professional Development Associates of Ontario. John Fredette, partner	6 March 2001	Ontario Arts Council. John Brotman, acting executive director; Steven Campbell, director of arts education and arts in the community; Julia Foster, chair. In joint submission with the Sport Alliance of Ontario. Guy Bradbury, general manager/ chief operating officer, and Rolf Lund, chair
7 February 2001	Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco- ontariens du Moyen-Nord catholique. Gisèle Morin, présidente, and Guill Archambault, officier	8 March 2001	Ontario Physical and Health Education Association. Wes McConnell, president
7 February 2001	Elementary Teachers' Feder- ation of Ontario, Rainbow district local	[no date] 2001	Ontario Secondary School Students' Association, North- western. Bob Bickford, regional president
8 February 2001	Elementary Teachers' Feder- ation of Ontario – Durham. Bill Butcher, president; Anna Huston, first vice-president; Rachel Genecey, second vice- president		
9 February 2001	Ontario Association of Super- visors of Physical Education and Health Education. Carol Rocks, president		

Individuals

6 January 2001	Sheri L. Stamarski	13 February 2001	Marion Abel
25 January 2001	Greg Garrett	13 February 2001	Carol Cricker-Wilson
25 January 2001	Jim Campbell	13 February 2001	Margaret Joseph
25 January 2001	John Burns	13 February 2001	Christine Bell
26 January 2001	Ian Fairley	13 February 2001	Cheryl Schuster
26 January 2001	John Lynch	13 February 2001	Suzanne Wade
27 January 2001	Bill Macdonald	13 February 2001	Catherine Gordon Green
29 January 2001	Marilyn Tudhope	13 February 2001	M. McCaslin
30 January 2001	Mary DiTomaso	13 February 2001	Dennis Kuyster
30 January 2001	John Hoffmann	13 February 2001	Sylvia Raynham
30 January 2001	Rick Smith	13 February 2001	Melissa Cowen
31 January 2001	Frank S. Bitonti	14 February 2001	Cathy Sears
31 January 2001	Andrew Foulds	14 February 2001	Paul B. Tonner, with input from David R. Lee and Ernie Aitkens
4 February 2001	Dave Noble		
5 February 2001	Carol A. Conway	18 February 2001	Wendy Smith-Heard
6 February 2001	Gaetanne Robineau-Rab	18 February 2001	Siobhan Duffy
7 February 2001	Ron Dubuc	18 February 2001	Janet Veit
7 February 2001	R.S. Darling and B. Slywchuk	19 February 2001	Barrie Lillie
7 February 2001	Michael Page	19 February 2001	Dorice Stephen
7 February 2001	Jennifer Holub	20 February 2001	Trudy Griffiths
7 February 2001	Sam Martin	20 February 2001	Gloria McGinn-McTeer
7 February 2001	Bob Young	20 February 2001	Bob Bill, Laurann Vanvolkenburg
8 February 2001	Michael Nihmey		
9 February 2001	Joyce Mckenzie	23 February 2001	Donald G. Mackay
9 February 2001	Al Truscott	23 February 2001	Graham Macmillan
10 February 2001	Delmar Maize	24 February 2001	Bob Gollinger
11 February 2001	Joe Simpson	7 March 2001	Michael Brown et al
12 February 2001	Doug Kettle	7 March 2001	Joan Woodcock
13 February 2001	Ross Perry	[no date] 2001	Ken Manderville

Ontario government ministry

21 February 2001 Ministry of Tourism, Culture
and Recreation. Judy
Sutcliffe, director, sport and
recreation branch

Other jurisdictions

19 February 2001 Ben Huot, assistant executive
director and director of
labour relations, Quebec
English School Boards
Association

19 February 2001 Mike Robinson, principal,
John Marshall High School,
Rochester, NY

19 February 2001 John Carlyle, superintendent,
River East School, division 9,
Winnipeg

Appendix E: Selected Bibliography

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